A DOZEN DOGS OR SO

By

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

Illustrated by

CECIL ALDIN

Ex Libris
JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

"A DOZEN DOGS OR SO"

GUY LALOIN

"A DOZEN DOGS OR SO"

BY

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

WITH TWELVE COLOUR PLATES

BY

CECIL ALDIN

LONDON
EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE LIMITED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1928

This Edition, numbered, and signed by the Author and Artist, is limited to Two Hundred and Fifty Copies.

This is No. 250

Patrick R. Chalmers

Feil Allen

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE LIMITED,
HIS MAJESTY'S PRINTERS, LONDON

The following verses have all appeared, at one time or another, in "Punch." I am grateful to the Proprietors for their permission to republish them, and likewise to Messrs. Methuen and Company Limited, who have permitted me to use here some verses from my books which are their property.

PATRICK R. CHALMERS.

September 1928.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Hay Harvest	1
About Spot	3
According to Cocker	7
To Barry	11
The New Anubis	15
The Dog-Roses	17
Fan	21
West Highland	23
Patsy	25
To Dexter of the "Entry"	27
To Nell	31
Brandy (A Hill Man)	35
The Young Visitor	39
Little Dog Riley	41
To Sheila	45
To a Terrier	47

HAY HARVEST

I MET a man mowing
A meadow of hay;
So smoothly and flowing
His swathes fell away,
At break of the day
Up Hambleden way;
A yellow-eyed collie
Was guarding his coat—
Loose-limbed and lob-lolly,
But wise and remote;

The morning came leaping,—
'Twas five of the clock,
The world was still sleeping
At Hambleden Lock,—
As sound as a rock
Slept village and Lock;
"Fine morning!" the man says,
And I says, "Fine day!"
Then I to my fancies
And he to his hay!

And lovely and quiet,
And lonely and chill,
Lay river and eyot,
And meadow and mill;—
I think of them still—
Mead, river, and mill;
For wasn't it jolly
With only us three—
The yellow-eyed collie,
The mower and me?

ABOUT SPOT

THE LITTLE GIRL'S SONG

I'VE got, I've got a little dog, Spot,
A little dog, Spot, have I;
His eyes are bright like the candle-light
And he's just a candle high;
And, ones and twos, he eats your shoes
When he can't have pudding or pie.

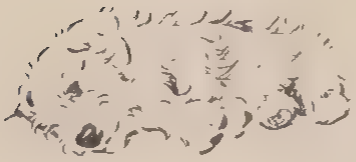
His coat's all rough like wriggly stuff,
He's white like a white snowball,
And his tuppenny tag of a tail can wag
Till it can't be seen at all;
And, twos and threes, he's very few fleas,
And he'll *often* come when you call.

And, beautiful sight, where his back's all white—
Oh, beautiful sight to view!
There's a beautiful splotch like a round gold watch
Of a beautiful golden hue;
And, threes and fours, when he scratches doors
They'll open and he'll trot through.

Whenever he's glad he runs like mad,
But when he is sad he'll sit,
But I ought to add that he never is sad,
He never is sad a bit;
And, fours and fives, when dinner arrives
He's just as ready as it.

When shadows of rooks wheel round he looks,
Then chases them all like sheep;
In the red, red, red geranium bed
He'll bury a bone most deep;
And, fives and sixes, he licks and licks his
Wet paws while he goes to sleep.

They tell me, "Jane, just take the train
When next the weather is fine,
For there's lots and lots of beautiful Spots
A little way down the line";
But, sixes and sevens, I don't believe *heaven's*
A beautiful Spot like mine—
Snips and snails
And puppy-dogs' tails,
As pretty a Spot as mine.



ACCORDING TO COCKER

SOME talk of retrievers,
Or hounds like old Belvoirs',
Make puppies receivers
For sentiment vain,
Name dandies (close lockers),
Love lurchers (law-mockers),—
But give me the Cockers
Again and again!

The leaf's getting golder,
Stroll out, gun on shoulder,
Down hedgerows a-smoulder
With berries a-new;
For steady employment,
For dash and enjoyment,
A Cocker's the boy meant
To come with you, too!

He'll frisk like a kitten,
He'll flash and he'll flit on,
But work like a Briton,
Through thickest of thorn;
He's little and dandy,
He's tireless and handy,
And kinder than candy
And merry as morn!

And never mind whether
'Tis fur or 'tis feather
On stubble or heather,
Or water or land,

A kill—he'll retrieve it,
A runner—you leave it
To him,—you'll receive it
Brought gaily "to hand"!

What brain could be brighter?
Whose manners politer?
What bother's not righter,
His paw on your knee?
And, big dogs and small dogs,
And short dogs and tall dogs,
A Cocker of all dogs,
A Cocker for me!

TO BARRY

(A SEALYHAM)

I HEARD the guggle and the tiny twitter
Of five fat atoms feeding as one whole,
And stooped and picked you, mewling, from the litter.
A thing no bigger than a penny roll;
But still possessed of a discerning soul!

For as I held you, small, and soft, and squirming,
I knew you to be knowledgeable, when
You licked my chin with puppy tongue, confirming
That you had recognized me—even then—
As the most wise, the very best of men!

I never wanted you to make a winner
(Your show bench slave were luckier far deceased!),
Fate shaped you just for friend and fellow-sinner –
A tough, hard-bitten, happy little beast,
As ready at a fight as at a feast;

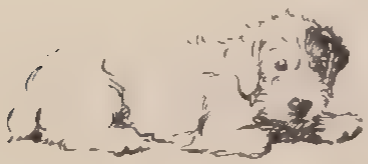
Short legged you go, broad brow'd and wiry coated,
Founts of affection in your limpid eyes,
Quick as a bolt—as many a buck rat's noted
In the brief instant ere the varmint dies,
And you invite applause with stern that plies!

And, if in cover (busy as a beaver),
Yip yap, you say, and out the rabbit slips,—
Drops to the Gun,—who straight must act retriever,—
Woe worth his game if once you get to grips,—
Fur fairly pulped, or Feather chewed to strips,

What then? *your* sires were never silk-mouthed gentles
To lift a partridge e'er so eggshell light,
You come, my boy, from Cymric detrimentals,
Tough customers in cairn, or earth, or fight,
Who never barked when there was chance to bite!

But best I love you as the fellow-creature,
The small, white shadow instant at my heels,
The firelit hearthrug's most outstanding feature,
For suasive paw and melting eye at meals,
And half a hundred other heart appeals.

Long may you live to cock your "stumpie tailie"
And end the tabbies' nightly Eistedfod,
And long leagues yet may your white paws go gaily,
And leap responsive to my lightest nod—
The only thing that e'er made me a god!



THE NEW ANUBIS

ALL along the moorland road a caravan there comes
Where the piping curlew whistles and the brown snipe drums;
And a long lean dog
At a sling jig-jog,
A poacher to his eyelids as all the lurcher clan,
Follows silent as a shadow and as clever as a man.

His master on the splashboard, oh, of ancient race he is;
He came down out of Egypt, as did all the Romanys;
With the hard hawk face
Of an old king race,
His hair is black and snaky and his cheek is brown as tea,
And pyramids and poacher-dogs are made by such as he.

Now, the dog he looks as solemn as the beak upon the bench,
But he'll pounce and pick a hare up, and he'll kill her with a wrench,
Or he'll sneak around a rick
And bring back a turkey chick;
And you'll wonder how they got him all his cockaleerie fakes:
Well, his master comes of people who turned walking-sticks to snakes !

There was once a god in Egypt, when the gods they first began,
With the muzzle of a lurcher on the body of a man;
But the Pharaoh of today
He has changed the ancient way,
And has found him a familiar by his caravan to jog,
With the headpiece of a Solomon, the body of a dog !

THE DOG-ROSES

THESE are the little dog-roses, these
Follow their mistress, thick as bees,
Run to her whistle and dance to her tune
Morning, evening and afternoon;
Little dog-roses, little dog-roses
All at the heels of their Lady June!

The Lady June she *had* to;
She wore her party togs;
She says, "And 'tis too bad, too,
I've got to leave the dogs;
I've got to walk a garden
With all the *dressy* crew,
And, though I'd beg its pardon,
Still, dogs 'ud never do."

The Lady June departed,
"You dare," says she, "to stir";
But scarcely was she started
Before they'd followed her,
Along the hedgerow creeping
To look which way she went,
And sitting down and peeping
And hoping she'd relent.

The Lady June relented;
She called, "Well, come on, do;
Was ever maid tormented
By such a plague as you?
But, if I've got no sermon
On Disobedience,
There's this I *will* be firm on—
You'll stop outside the fence!"

So when you see dog-roses
Outside the garden-gate
(Which everybody knows is
Quite commonplace o' late),
Then, to the facts a-falling,
The compliment implied,
You'll say, " 'Tis June come calling—
I see her dogs outside."

These are the little dog-roses, these
Wait for their mistress (as one sees),
Wait on her whistle or wag to her tune
All day down to the rising moon;
Little dog-roses, little dog-roses
Hard on the heels of their Lady June!

FAN

FAN, the hunt terrier, runs with the pack,
A little white bitch with a patch on her back;
She runs with the pack as her ancestors ran—
We've an old-fashioned lot here and breed 'em like Fan;
Round of skull, harsh of coat, game and little and low,
The sort that we bred sixty seasons ago.

So she's harder than nails, and she's nothing to learn
From her scarred little snout to her cropped little stern,
And she hops along gaily, in spite of her size,
With twenty-four couple of big badger-pyes;
('Tis slow, but 'tis sure is the old white and grey,
And 'twill sing to a fox for a whole winter day.)

Last year at Rook's Rough, just as Ben put 'em in,
'Twas Fan found the rogue who was curled in the whin;
She pounced at his brush with a drive and a snap,
"*Yip yap*, boys," she told 'em, "I've found him, *Yip yap!*"
And they put down their noses and spoke to his line
Like bells in a steeple most stately and fine.

'Twas a point of ten miles and a kill in the dark
That frightened the pheasants in Fallowfield Park,
But into the worry flew Fan like a shot
And snatched the tit-bit that old Rummage had got;
Who-whoop, little Fan with the patch on her back,
She broke up her fox with the best of the pack.

WEST HIGHLAND

WITH stern a-droop, a dowie chiel,
I see him lugged at Beauty's heel,
A captive bound on Fashion's wheel,
Down Bond Street's aisle,
Far from his land of cairn and creel
In grey Argyle.

I wonder if in dreams he goes,
Afar from streets and kindred woes,
A-rabbiting with eager nose
And strenuous paw
In birch-woods where the west wind blows
By banks of Awe ;

And if his slumbers take him back
To trail the mountain-fox's track,
In corries of the shifting wrack
Where one may spy
Old Cruachan's twin Titan stack
Heaved to the sky ;

Or, boudoir-bred degenerate,
If ne'er he knew the nobler state,
The birk-clad brae, the roaring spate,
The tod's dark lair—
Too lacking for to girn at Fate
Or greatly care.

And better this, perhaps you'd say,
Than break his heart for yesterday,
Uneasy in the dreams that stray
Where lost trails stretch—
Well, he 's my pity either way,
Poor little wretch !

PATSY

PUPPY dog, rough as a bramble,
Eyed like a saint,
Beggar to chew and to gambol,
Corky and quaint,
Chasing your tail like a fubsy turbillion,
Plaguing a playmate with fuss of a million
Gnats,
But keen as a kestrel
And fierce as a stoat is,
A-thrill to ancestral
Furies at notice
Of rats,
Rats, little hound of Beelzebub, rats!

And as you sleep off a surfeit,
Mischief and tea,
Prone on the summer-warm turf, it
Surely must be
(Rapturous whimper and tremulant twitching),
Somewhere or other there's hunting bewitching;
That's
More blessed than biscuit;
I'll lay, through your slumbers,
They squeak and they frisk it
In shadowy numbers,
R-r-rats,
Rats, little hound of Beelzebub, rats!

Cecil Aldin

TO DEXTER OF THE "ENTRY"

(ON HIS WAY TO "CUB")

ROLLICKING, frolicking, gaysome o' stern,
Dexter, fine pup, but there's lots you've to learn—
Lots you've to learn about life and its rubs;
So *cop*, my lad, *cop*, my lad, come and catch cubs;
Come away, *cop* and catch cubs!

Bouncing and pouncing and wild as a hawk,
Dexter, forget it—your riot at "walk";
"Chopped" chickens, did you? and ran turkey-cocks?
Dexter, forget it and dream about *fox*;
Cop, my son, nothing but fox.

Here again, near again, Dexter, good lad;
Next year you'll collar the lead from your dad;
Next year you'll fight him and win—for the mask;
So *cop*, puppy, *cop*, puppy, come to your task;
Come away, *cop*, to your task!

Hoop, my lad, *coop*, my lad, listen to me;
Rabbit, *a-a-ah*, rabbit, you let rabbit be;
'Ware the white scuts when they break with a rush,
Don't you run nothing that hasn't a brush;
Cop, my lad, try for his brush!

Larking and yarking, you leave 'em forlorn,
All your fool fancies, an' get to the horn;
Under the paling or over the top,
Get away, get away, get away, *cop*,
Come along, come along, *cop*

Yuffing an' snuffing at farmy yard smells—
Dexter, my dainty, there's *scent* and naught else;
Once you've a-got it you'll know that there's none
Other for ever, so try for it, son !
Cop, come and try for it, son !

Shog along, jog along, *yoi*, puppy, *yoi !*
Come and get blooded, get blooded, good boy;
Cop, come an' sort 'em at seven a.m.
Cubs'll larn you, my lad, you'll a-larn them;
Over, my lad, an' larn them !

TO NELL

(SPANIEL PUP AND CHRISTMAS-BOX)

OF sausage build and sprawly gait
And clumsy paws at awkward angles
And ears with infant curls ornate,
Your puppyhood my heart entangles;
Pray realize that 'tis your fate
To follow *me*, my slave and mate,
Till death doth part, by moors or mangels.

So please rejoice that you've been born
Into a world of pats and beatings,
Of hearth-rugs and of bramble-thorn,
Of combs and castor-oil and Keating's,
And rabbits bursting from the corn
As the last August acre's shorn,
And lawful and *un*lawful eatings—

A world you'll find that's chock-a-block
With interest, or I, your Jove, err;
Where spaniels sit *as still as stock*
By guns in rides or roots or clover;
Or, flying ears and sterns a-cock,
They work a hedge like one o'clock—
Hie in, good bitch! Hie up! Hie over!

And, since the horoscope seems clear,
A glance twelve months ahead were pleasant:
I see a day, as Yule draws near,
You've just retrieved an old cock-pheasant

(A rogue that ran like any deer);
And I? I boast to all who'll hear;
"My Nell, who's surely a career
Before her, was this time last year
The littlest thing in pups, a mere
Half-stockingful of Christmas present."

BRANDY

(A HILL MAN)

GRIZZLED and stiff with his eight Decembers
The old dog hobbles across the yard,
Eyes blood-shotten and red as embers,
Coat worn thin and a face be-scarred:
Poor old bandy dog, poor old Brandy dog,
Full of battles and fights fought hard.

Time to sit in the cosy ingle?
Time to curl on the roe-skin mat,
Where the warrior dreams shall mingle
Fox and otter and mountain-cat?
Torn ears cock to them, grim jaws lock to them
(Devil a doubt—you'd say—of that!)

"Past your best," so the critic said it,
"Bit too old for the hill," said he;
"Liked the looks of you" (to his credit,
Captious Sassenach though he be);
That's his say of it, that's the way of it?
Let him climb to the cairns and see!

Cairns and crags where the snow-flake flurries,
Coigns where the great hill-foxes grin,
Hostile caves of a hundred worries—
Take the terriers, *huic* them in:
Lithe and little dogs, keen and kittle dogs,
Two twin devils to thrust and pin!

Hark, they're up to him, hot and deadly
(Hark, and hear it, and hold your breath !);
Yards below, how the fight roars redly—
Little Besom and little Beth;
Hark the noise of 'em, hark the joys of 'em—
Battle, murder, and sudden death !

Beat, though—out again, bristling, bleeding,
Lost him somehow (your young 'uns can);
Pick them up, they shall prove their breeding
Yet with many a cateran—
" Now, old pup, to him ! in, and up to him !
Leu in, Brandy ! leu in, old man ! "

Mute and murderous, in he bustles;
Never a whimper boasts he's found;
Only an eerie wind that rustles,
Moans and moils, as the flasks go round;
Dark and chill it is, on the hill it is—
Yes, but the old dog's still to ground !

. . . . . .

Out at last crawls the grim old savage,
Red as ribbons from crest to pad;
One hill-robber no more shall ravage—
Had the brush of him, eh, old lad ?
Lord, no fears o' you, eight hard years o' you;
Wouldn't have quit until you had !

Grizzled and stiff with his long Decembers,
The old dog hirples adown the hill,
Eyes blood-shotten and red as embers,
Rumbling yet of the grip and kill:
Poor old Brandy dog, poor old bandy dog,
Worth the pick of the young 'uns still !

THE YOUNG VISITOR

HAIL, little guest of a
Bard in his hall;
Hail, little jest of a
Butter-fat ball;
Hail, boy, and welcome,
Though some people *do*
Say that you're Hell come
And Tommy thereto!

New from the nursery,
Dumped on the mat,
Just the most cursory
Glance tells 'em that
You'll be the artful
Young fellow, my lad,
You'll be the cartful
Of monkeys gone mad.

Yet, Mister Packet of
Catch-as-catch-can,
You in the jacket of
Motley and tan,
Welcome today, boy,
For all their talk—
Dog-puppy Playboy,
And Foxhound at walk.

©GI LALDIN

LITTLE DOG RILEY

LITTLE dog Riley's mamma,
Kin to a champion, took
Someone, as Riley's papa,
Not in the Kennel Club Book;
But little dog Riley, we hopefully feel,
Favours his mother a very great deal.

Little dog Riley's oh quite
On the fox-terrier plan;
Little dog Riley is white,
Little dog Riley is tan,
And much like another he'd be had not Fate
Found him a heart twice too big for his weight,

Which is the awkwardest—Hang!
Here comes the butcher's white "bull";
"Pin him," says Heart, "with a bang—
Pin the big blighter and pull!"
Then, all in a moment of dust and disgrace,
Little dog Riley's a surgical case.

Little dog Riley is slick
Varmints to tackle and "larn";
Little dog Riley is quick;
Let us go up to the barn—
Look, while young Vicky's still shaking her rat,
Little dog Riley's nipped two—and the cat.

Little dog Riley's no art
    Lightly to make you his friend,
But if he's given his heart,
    Then it is yours without end,
For little dog Riley, I'd wish you to know,
Sticks to a friend as he sticks to a foe.

Little dog Riley's mamma
    (Hush, for I'd whisper it) chose
Something as Riley's papa—
    Just what it *was* no one knows;
But what's a bend-sinister stain of the stud
If you stand like a paladin prince of the blood
Or like little dog Riley whose pedigree's mud?

Cecil Aldin

TO SHEILA

(A LABRADOR DEBUTANTE)

KING SOLOMON sang with the happiest knack;
His Beloved, he told us, was comely but black;
And I, who can plagiarize patly and plumbly,
Declare, my good Sheila, you, too, black and comely.

But "beloved"? you ask, like a daughter of Eve;
Young lady, my heart's never worn on my sleeve;
What cheek! and yourself little more than a pup too:
My love, Miss New-comer, is one to work up to.

And, just though you're shapely and shiny and swell,
Don't think that you've taken the place of old Nell,
Who sleeps near the door that she's lately forsaken;
No gun-case to thrill her, no whistle to waken.

But if you'll be prudent with rabbit and hare,
And if, when you're told to, you *do* "have a care,"
And if at an order you're prompt to obey it,
You may *hope*, I'll say that—yes, I'll certainly say it.

And if you can conquer original sin
And rarely or never, no never, "run in,"
And abjure talking rats with that young detrimental,
The terrier Riley, and if you are gentle

And winsome and *working*, we never can tell,
Though I couldn't love any like rusty-coat Nell
(Who'll greet me, I'm sure, where the asphodel's shady),
Still, I *might* be consoled by a Labrador lady.

TO A TERRIER

CRIB, on your grave beneath the chestnut boughs
Today no fragrance falls nor summer air,
Only a master's love who laid you there
Perchance may warm the earth 'neath which you drowse
In dreams from which no dinner-gong may rouse,
Unwakeable, though close the rat may dare,
Deaf, though the rabbit thump in playful scare,
Silent, though twenty tabbies pay their vows.

And yet, mayhap, some night when shadows pass,
And from the fir the brown owl hoots on high,
That should one whistle 'neath a favouring star
Your small white shade shall patter o'er the grass,
Questing for him you loved o' days gone by,
Ere Death the dog-thief carried you afar!

M/N
393